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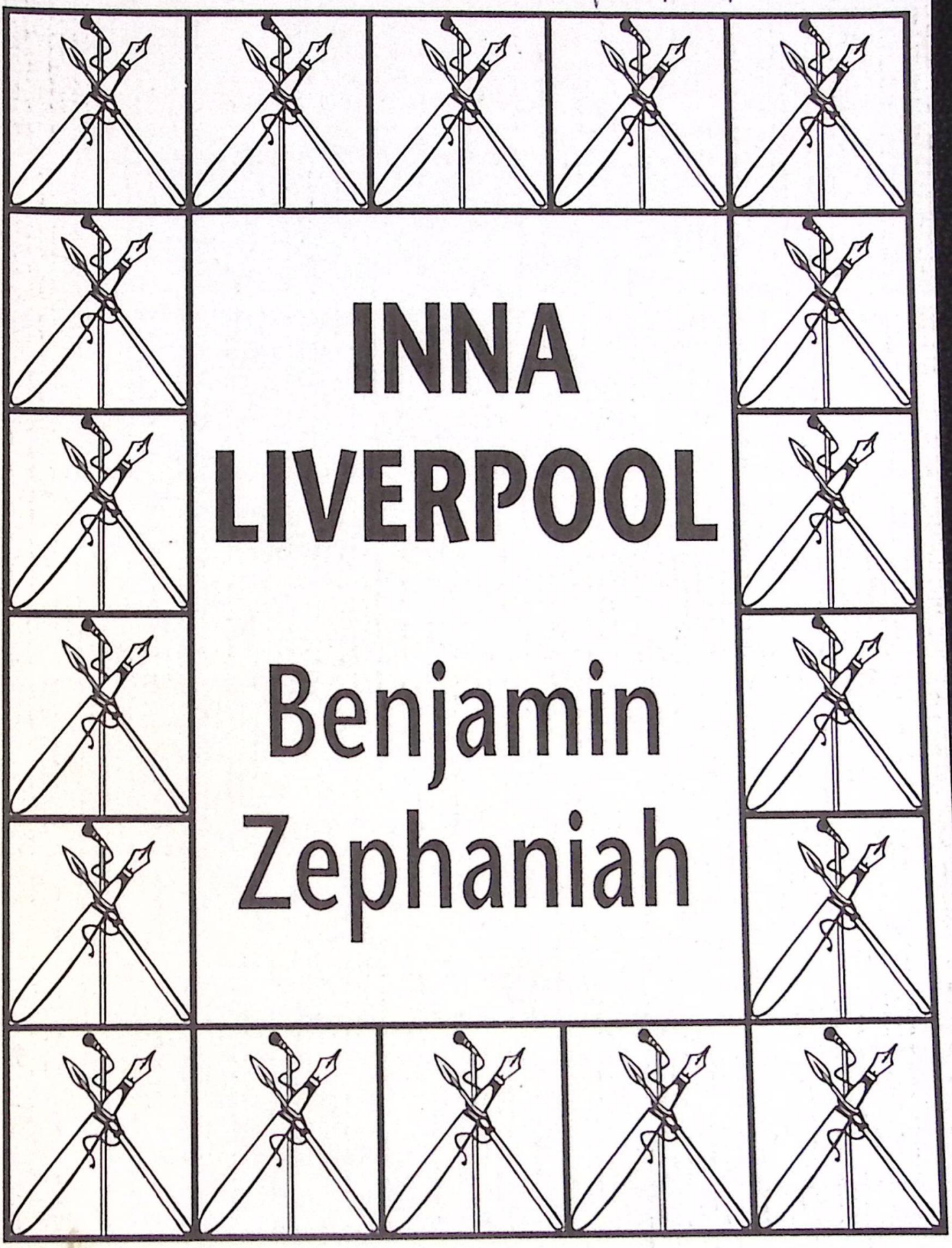

INNA LIVERPOOL

Benjamin Zephaniah

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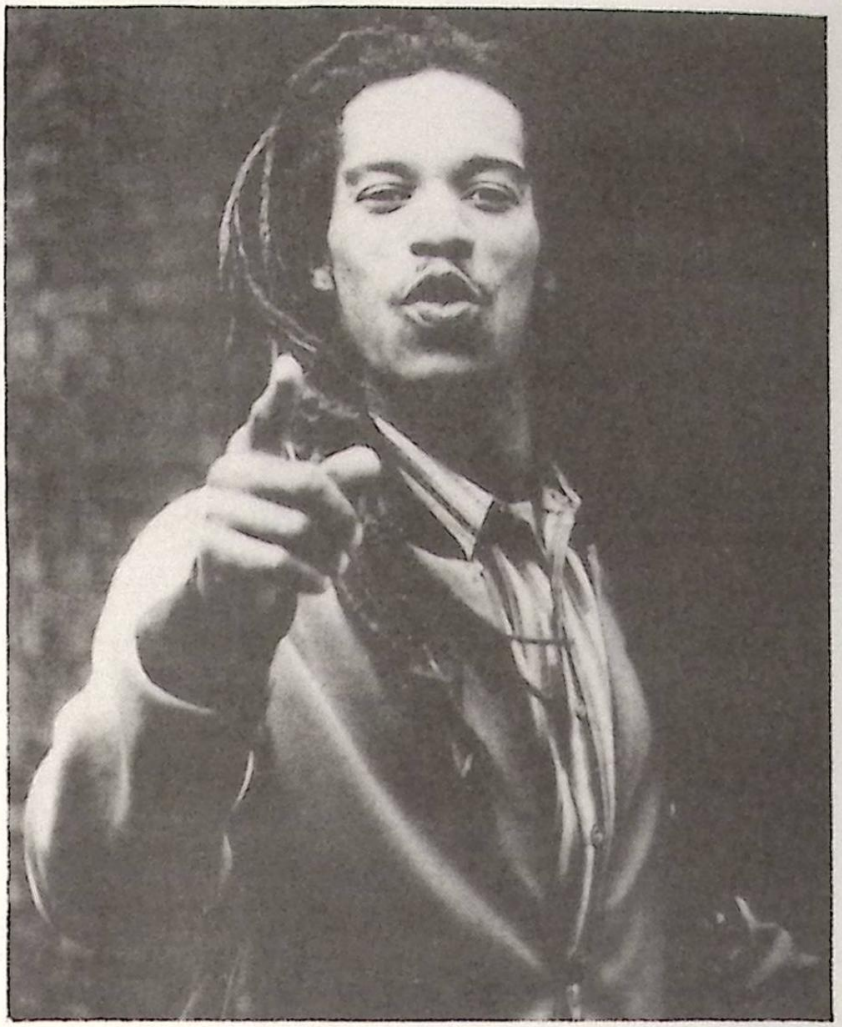
All by Benjamin Zephaniah



Dedicated to de people of Liverpool

> 'A people who have inspired me so much,
> a people who deserve freedom'

I would like to take dis opportunity to thank de *Africa Arts Collective* for inviting me to Liverpool as a writer in residence.

De residency officially ran from de 1st of July 1988 till de 30th June 1989, but wherever I may wonder in de future, Liverpool will always be wid me.

Thanks . . .

Benjamin Zephaniah, November 1988

Wanted: Ideas

This is an appeal to anyone with a bit of brains
Your ideas are needed urgently

Everyday more politicians diseased with money flood into makeshift refugee camps known as parliamentary buildings.

It is our duty as citizens of Earth to help these simple people and support this international appeal.

Please give generously, your ideas will save lives and aid the longevity of the planet Earth.

Send all donations, however small, to:

The Front Line
P.O. Box 4 Freedom
Peoples International
Yourland.

All ideas will be gratefully received and transported with common sense to the politicians in need.

Liverpool 1988

Ina Liverpool me see de good de bad
de happy and de sad
de history you've had,
Ina Liverpool me see de rich and de poor
most people need more
de future's unsure,
Some move like dem big
Some move like dem broad
Some move like dem massive and dem come from yard,
Is a mixed population
Some bad Police station
People meking money outa race relations.

Ina Liverpool me see de burden bearer
Ex-seafarer, democracy's murder,
Ina Liverpool me see de truth revealing
A militant feeling, bad political dealing.

A city built on slavery
But de everyday person nu have a penny
Yes a very high rate of poverty
And it have a big place in history,
Many actors will put on de accent
Trying to portray the Liverpool experience

Media think its a money making subject
but de soap dat dem mek de people reject,
And plenty people think its cool to visit
but on de journey home dem sey "I couldn't live in it",
Some will come and just see de city centre
Forget about de ghetto too frighten to enter,
Forget about de people, forget about de evil,
just check places famous for de Beatles
or visit a cathedral to photograph de steeple
it really is incredible cause dem say it wonderful.

Ina Liverpool me see dat and more
Forget de tourist tour
and see what is in store
Ina Liverpool I see a people stan strong
it inspire a song
about what is going on.

Looking at de places where people live
and de so called help dat de government give
mek me think and wonder bout class and race
drive home dat de state two faced,
when me tink, well me wonder how de people survive
even though so many may commit suicide

You really have to see it, if you see it beware
you can't tell what will happen there,
If you really want to learn bout de North South divide
tek a look around Merseyside
Many people sey Liverpool militant

because no-one heard in de government.
Me is just an observer observing a scene
I could never be an expert if you know what I mean
but I believe Liverpool must be heard
Some things are cool, but some things are absurd

Ina Liverpool me see a colourful people
forget about de Beatles
treat everyone as equal,
I was observing a people who can win
they're made of bones and blood and skin
And London are you listening?

❦ ❦ ❦

De Drunk Won't Smoke the Pipe of Peace

De Drunk won't smoke de pipe of peace
He said it makes him dopey
De drunk won't smoke de pipe of peace
But does he hokey-cokey?
He said he might get stoned and wild
And something dat's funky
Or he might rise like Supa Man and fall
Like Humpty Dumpty.
De drunkard vomits, de drunkard pisses
And many males beat up de Mrs
There's blood and vomit and he want kisses.
De macho man is small.
She drunkard can't hold down her supper,
She takes a downer, den an upper,
She just can't hold herself together,
She cannot walk but crawl
And crawl dey do, some crawl when driving
Some die and some still surviving,
Come daytime some start oppressing
De seeds my kind are germinating
For meditating
Love creating,
Their kind are just green grass hating,
Cause of wine there's no relating,
My kind find it so frustrating.

De drunk won't smoke de pipe of peace
He must like his hangover,
He's after kicks and drunkard chicks
He likes a drunkard lover.
De drunk won't smoke de pipe of peace
She said dat it's uncivilised,
But I am not drunk,
No I am quite nice,
So who's he/she to criticize?

Strange Truth

It's strange de way I think I am free
when really I am not,
It's strange de way dat I stay cool
when fires burning hot,
it's strange de way my mind relaxes when my bills are paid,
it's strange de way I keep on going, but till now I've stayed.
It's strange de way I write poems because I have no gun,
it's strange de way you read dem
but I am sure you will like some,
it's strange de way I have no friends but everyones friendly,
it's strange de way I feel unsafe wid state security.
Well that's all strange, but stranger still, is I love peace,
but I would kill,
a monk I am, a monk at heart
but I would tear a state apart,
it's strange dat I should fight for peace,
it's strange dat I can't trust de priest,
it's strange, so strange that there's no chains
but slavery still affects our brains.

De Establishment Poem

Dis established guy ask I could I write ta poem fe him,
I tell him yes,
I play most request but enter no contest,
him sey I must write directly in an indirect way,
an I must mek de readers imagination imagine dat I
a try tell dem some ting widin some plot,
dat will mek dem tink an stop, but really I am not,
Him tell I, I don't need no riddim, rhyme or reason,
or any a dat bad talk dem hear pon de streets,
him sey de poem must be a propar poem,
wid propar words, an propar spelling.

OK I sey an I go away.
Den I come back and wid two bad poem,
I look him in de face
an drop two wicked poem pon him,
de first on just roll of me tongue so fast him never
hear it, an de second one went,

Hic curry, hic curry doc,
don't sit an watch de clock,
you'll miss de fun an you need some,
hic curry, hic curry doc,
we rock, move off.

❦ ❦ ❦

Rootless

Dis a twenty-four hour business
Dis business nu stop fe lunch an dem ting,
Dem jus eat pon de job.
Dis business established from long time,
Whole heap a kings an queens mek appointment wid dem,
Dem have some wicked assets me a tell yu,
An yu tink a little hustling dem do, No I,
When dem ready fe mek money dem really mek money,
Dem rootless me a tell you.
Hey, dem nu deal wid too much meetings yu know,
Dem jus check de agenda an deal wid tings,
an people who work fe dem can travel,
all over de earth dem gu bout dem business,
If only we could look after fe we business like dem,
We da do better business dan dem,
But we da fe work a different line.
Dis a twenty-four hour business me a tell yu,
Always hav people in de office,
Always hav people in de field.
Dis a twenty-four hour business me say,
Babylon nu sleep.

❦ ❦ ❦

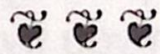
A State of Rock

I am tangled up and I just can't sleep,
I am drinking water strong and neat,
Music got me lost in de beat,
I am in a state of rock.
Well I'll keep rocking till sunrise,
I'll see de day through riddimwise,
I'll walk de streets and advertise,
I'm suffering from rock.

De symptoms are quite obvious
we're cool and hot and contagious
not rocking is ridiculous
you'll suffer, its so infectious.
There is no Doctor dat can cure,
but it is painless dats for sure,
when you are caught you will want more,
rocking is what your body's for.
I am sweating but I love de smell
me mind and body's doing well,
I've danced for years now, can't you tell,
I am in a state of rock.

What Yu Eat

Fish an chips will cramp yu lips
an currant buns will hurt yu bum
hot curries will mek yu run
hot peppars mek you angry.
Sausages might given yu fits
too much mincemeat gives you de s _ _ _ _!
an chillies mek yu eyes go red
brown bread's alright wid honey.
Some take aways may sell yu dogs
small ants fried go nice wid frogs,
drink vinegar juice an you'll hang loose
an chewing garlics funny.
But people day will always eat
veg, pulses, fungi and meat,
today I sat down in a seat
an watched a man eat money



Poser and Company

At de posers' pub I saw you posing
wid your poser friend who posed wid you,
den you went and posed wid other friends
all of dem were posers too.

A benefit called for radical minds
just posers of a different kind,
posing for de third world,
posing for a cause,
posing at de gig you posed and gave polite applause.

In yu GTI I saw you posing at high speed,
and I took heed,
so high speed poser, pose away,
be thankful you can pose today.

At Heathrow Airport you pose by
cause every now and den you fly,
you pose in clothes until you reach,
den you pose naked on me beach.

You even try a silly pose
when you sniff white stuff up yu nose,
OK, it's your life I suppose,
you're in de ring, receive your blows.

And now it's credit card pose time,
you pose wid every cheque you sign,
but poser look and realise,
You can't see much wid closed, posed eyes.

Jack and Jill Grow Up

Jack and Jill went up de hill
to fetch a pail of water,
Jill's daddy went raving mad
he thought he lost his daughter,
Jack and Jill were up there meditating wid their maker
who supplied them wid green herbs and
sheets of Rizzla papers.
Jack and Jill came down dat night and day look quite
contented,
day let nature take its course, and day both consented,
when day came down de earth span round
and Jack had to be carried,
Jack said
"Jill we've done it now, I think we should get married",
Jill said
"bullshit, balls, get stuffed, I am staying independent",
she kicked him in his ding a ling, and left him on de
pavement.

Mistaken Identity

Raid ina Hansworth,
Night spot club, Lozzells Road,
Plenty black people get lock up,
And some 'erb was found.

No raid ina Chemsley Wood,
Toffy nose wine bar, Empire Road,
Plenty trendy people free,
Lots who drop dots of L.S.D.

Raid ina St. Pauls
Black an white club, Grosvenor Road,
Plenty black people get lock up,
And some 'erb was found.

No raid at Rebeccas Casino
Whitewash Road,
Plenty coke get sniff
And talks of trips,
But nu raid nu lick.

Raid ina Liverpool,
Granby Street youths fight back,
T.V. watchers an Wapping press day say a riot,

Youth sey uprising,
Youth sey we nu have no riot shield, riot van, or,
Standard issue baton fe riot,
Youth sey we feel down trodden wid dem downpressing,
So we uprising.

Tings cool in de tranquil surrounding of de
Liverpool Garden Show
Flowers a grow
Tings look sweet,
No blood pon dees street,
De Liverpool Garden Show.

I say to de Police boy,
I know where plenty of drugs is,
L.S.D., Cocaine, Heroin,
And some a dem people deal wid some funny
Kinda sex dat involve children,
and animals,
and some bad video nasties,

Police sey him following enquiries,
Sey him have priorities,
But it really seem to me
Me colour's unlucky,
Cause Police will come quickly
To raid our community
When day could be quite busy
Raiding dare own family.

People Here Are

Some people here hav nothing
All need a little bit more
You can't find many rich kids here
Most people here are poor,
De people here like dancing
Most people eat at home
Girls style is still mini skirts
De men still wear two tone,
Fighting is called scrapping
making love's a screw
Cars are known as wagons
A shit is called a poo
Yu don't drink yu lubricate
Yu don't kiss yu snog
Massaging's just called rubbin
A toilet is a bog.

Hats are known as crowns
real crowns hav been rejected,
Politicians don't come here
Credit cards are not accepted,
If yu are old yu simply old
If yu young you are a kid
Money here is known as dough
An one pound is a quid.

Families are broken, radicals are bred,
Houses are just left wasted,
Someone always nicks de lead,
Social workers are busy, babies really scream,
Radios don't stay in cars, an kids just love ice scream.

Don't patronise de poorness
Don't snob talk de slang,
Don't just come fe cheap shopping,
Hurt someone an you'll hang,
It you take de mickey or de piss you'll get it mate
Nu matter what you sey I tink de people here are great.

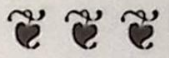
❦ ❦ ❦

Multi racial Smiles

If looks could kill because of looks
I would be Frankenstein,
Certain kind a looks tell me I am a different kind,
I see it daily as I walk de cities dat we've built
And what gets me is you don't even show a bit of guilt,
My colleague is just one of you in ethnic looking dress
Says "I am British, but liberal I read all ethnic press",
I keep me eyes open but den after a while
My anti racist colleague give me multi racial smiles.

Here comes RAT (racial awareness training)
All de staff were sent,
Day all thought day were guiltless
Therefore not a tear was spent,
And should de faults of one's forefather be blamed on one's dis time,
Is there something in one's blood dat flows way down de line?
Does my colleague reap de benefits and can day do me harm?
And why is it dat dare house has electronic alarm?
My colleague shouts dat racism is wicked,
mad and vile, den,
My anti racist colleague give me multi racial smiles.

Dares no chip shop on my should do don't answer me
dat way,
Watch me as I get blacker and I demand equal pay,
You smile wid me for two years straight and den sly as a
fox
You vote against my culture wid yu X at ballot box,
dats democracy and freedom and you're safe when
you're at home
You even go to Reggae dances but never alone,
De system is a friend of yours, my life's on your system's
files
So anti racist shitbag drop your multi racial smiles.



Reggae People

Reggae people are die hard people
day smile yet dare oppressed
reggae people must move around
day always change dare address,
anyone can tell dem when dare walking down a street,
when day step day bounce an bop as if dare is a beat . . . . .

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